



Utah Clicks to Make Applications Simpler

By Laura Coleman

In most states, when families apply for government services, they fill out numerous applications, answer duplicated questions and spend more time than necessary. The **Utah Clicks/Universal Application System (UAS)** has made this process more customer-friendly.

The program, which was launched statewide in May 2005 as a partnership between Utah State University and the state department of health, provides access to a Web-based intra-agency application process designed to help families apply for multiple programs.

By filling out an online application, families can apply for programs such as Medicaid, WIC, CHIP and Head Start. Because UAS allows families to complete and submit paperwork online for multiple programs, the need to visit multiple offices is minimized. The application is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is available in English and Spanish.

For Lois Bloebaum, the manager of the Reproductive Health Program at the Utah Department of Health, a program like this was a dream come true.

“Ninety percent of the credit goes to USU. We had been dreaming that wouldn’t it be great if women could access an application from their home or business computers or public libraries where they could do this quick screening process online and facilitate earlier entry to prenatal care,” she

said. “The screening process asks families questions that are shared by numerous programs so they don’t have to fill out four applications.”

Adrienne Akers, senior researcher for Utah State University, said families indicated that they didn’t know where to get the services they needed, and this provided the impetus for change.

“Families said that they call programs different things in different states, they couldn’t get out of work when the offices were open,” she said.

Akers said the federal government recognized families’ struggles with these issues, and offered grants so states could work from within for a remedy. The initial grant provided \$150,000 a year for four years. Approximately half the funds went into the development of the Utah Clicks technology.

Akers said the prototype for the program is sound for several reasons.

“Ours was done at a reasonably low price and ours was successful,” she said. She said that the creators of the software exercised good principles of software development. “They automated those parts of the process that made sense as opposed to automating all the parts,” she said. “They didn’t try to remove the human element all together.

“We found out that 55 percent of people applying said they are applying from home,” said Akers. “If you look at national statistics, the number of people who have Internet access is growing. Everybody knows how to use the Internet.”

On the application for the Innovations Award, Akers said 97 percent of users indicated they would recommend Utah Clicks to other families, contributing to the success of promoting the program only through word-of-mouth and newspaper articles.

Bloebaum said while there were challenges in implementation, she thinks the program would be easily transferable to other states. Texas and Pennsylvania also offer online application processes.

“I think that we have sort of been the trailblazers and worked out a lot of the process, so I can definitely see it,” she said.

To learn more about Utah Clicks, visit <https://utahclicks.org/index.cfm>.

Fast Facts

- Utah Clicks allows citizens to use an online application to apply for government services.
- Services like Medicaid, WIC and Head Start participate in the program.
- Start-up costs for the program were funded through a federal grant that allocated \$150,000 annually for four years.